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Steve Mears: Now we want to welcome in a huge hockey fan, huge Blackhawks fan. He's a hockey player, and he's Illinois Congressman Mike Quigley. Congressman, how're you doing today?

Mike Quigley: Great, thanks for having me, guys.

Steve Mears: Thank you very much. Before we get into all of your different things that you're working on and events that are coming up, I gotta ask you: You've got to be thrilled with your Blackhawks and the way they've been playing – they're 10-0-2 – what do you think about your hometown team?

Mike Quigley: I think it was a brilliant marketing strategy to win fans back. Here we are thinking about all these promotions, and all you got to do is go undefeated a quarter of the way through the season. It's a hot ticket here in Chicago.

E.J. Hradek: So what do you think? Is this the year they can win another cup? Give us your thoughts.

Mike Quigley: I love it. I'm just a very cautious guy after I watched a hundred years of Cubs losing. I was in Philadelphia when Pat Kane scored the game-winner, so I'll take it. I just hope they win ten in a row in the playoffs.

E.J. Hradek: That's a good time to do that. That's an excellent time to do that.

Steve Mears: Congressman, I know you've been on the show before, but for those who haven't heard your background story, could you just tell us a little bit about how you got involved in the game, how long you've been following the Blackhawks, and so forth?

Mike Quigley: Like a lot of guys in America back in the sixties, we didn't have a lot of hockey rinks. So I, early on, played on pond hockey, street hockey, garage/basement hockey, then when the rinks came up, we started playing there. I've played since I was seven years old. The first hockey game I ever went to, Bobby Hull jumped off the bench, took a slap shot and scored. I was just stuck with it – just the greatest game.

E.J. Hradek: We got the big weekend coming up, Hockey Day in America with all the games on NBC. It's going to be Hockey Weekend across America. You were telling us before we got on the air here, you got to play at Soldier Field yesterday. They're planning a big weekend of outdoor hockey there. Gimme the scouting report on the ice conditions at Soldier Field.

Mike Quigley: Well, I haven't played in the pouring rain since childhood, and I don't recommend it for kids, but the ice surface was not so great but the area was just amazing – playing in Soldier Field. But this Saturday, we play the USA Warriors there in a charity game with some former Blackhawks. And one of the guys you know who announces, Pat Foley, is going to skate with us. Troy Murray, Steve Conroy, Grant Mulvey and the gang, we're playing the USA Warriors, which are all Iraqi and Afghanistan veterans injured in combat. A lot of Purple Heart winners. We've played them twice before in DC. What better place to be than Soldier Field watching the veterans play us in a hockey game?

Steve Mears: Congressman, I know this is something you're very passionate about: what do we need to do to get kids more involved in sports in general, and hockey in particular? What needs to happen at all different levels, and playing all types of hockey, whether it's on ice, or playing roller hockey or so forth, what do you think?

Mike Quigley: I think, what we try to do in Chicago is the Hawks and I have teamed up to try to put floor hockey in every school or park-district gym that wants one. We did it with the Boys and Girls club here a year ago. I went back about six months, and there were kindergarten girls playing floor hockey and just loving it. And when they get their first chance to skate, you know, I think they're going to pick up hockey skates instead of figure skates. Nothing against that, but you've got to grow the game from the ground up, when kids are just starting to appreciate sports and get involved. And even if they never pick it up more seriously than that, you can't help but

to love the game once you're out there playing. Either it's floor hockey or getting out on the ice.

E.J. Hradek: Now are you guys in Congress there, are you going to be playing the lobbyists again? I went down to Washington to watch that game awhile back, and you guys go after each other a little bit. Is that going to be on the docket again for this year?

Mike Quigley: That's on the docket in April. It looks like the game's all set for where the Capitals play. It's one of our favorite games of the year. It raises money for, among things, the DC youth hockey programs that the NHL and USA Hockey have been so involved with. So, we appreciate what the NHL and USA Hockey does, and what the Blackhawks do in our community: growing the game and at the same time, you're enjoying yourself. In the end, it's up to us to bring out the next generation. It's a tougher challenge with kids apparently stuck on video games to an extent. But I – if you love hockey, you smell the ice, you feel like suiting up and getting out there.

Steve Mears: One more thing Congressman: could you ever get President Obama on the ice?

Mike Quigley: That's not going to happen. A lot of things can happen folks, but he's just not the biggest hockey enthusiast. I will give him credit: when the Hawks went to the White House, he agreed to our request. And you do recall when the Hawks were there, we had a street hockey game on the South Lawn where the First Lady joined us. And we had kids with Hawk jerseys and Capital jerseys playing a game right in front of the Stanley Cup. So I'll take that for now, I gotta get him out to a Blackhawk game next.

Steve Mears: Yes, absolutely. We know he's a big sports fan. Well Congressman, best of luck with the upcoming events, and we really appreciate you joining us. Thanks so much.

Mike Quigley: Glad to. Go Hawks!

E.J. Hradek: There you go. For all you Hawk fans out there: "Go Hawks."

Steve Mears: A hockey player, a big Hawks fan. I remember, he was on the show a couple years ago. He talked about watching Stan Mikita, Bobby Hull growing up in Chicago.

